Against an allocation of 40,000 tonnes of wheat for November, 96 for issue from the local depots of Maharashtra only 32,030 tonnes (provisional) has been lifted by the buyers of Maharashtra and lifting of the balance quantity is in progress.

All possible steps have been taken to regulate the issue of wheat under open sale to increase the availability of wheat in the open market.

Fall in the Capacity utilisation of Steel Plants in the Public Sector

932. SHRI O.P. KOHLI: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been steep fall in the capacity utilisation of the Steel Plants in the public sector like Rourkela Steel Plant;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and by bow much amount the Rourkela Steel Plant is lagging behind its capacity utilisation;

(c) whether the public sector steel plants are running into losses;

(d) if so, the details thereof plant-wise; and

(e) steps proposed to be taken to improve the capacity utilisation and to remove the causes that are responsible for incurring of the losses?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): (a) and (b) There has not been a steep fall in the aggregate capacity utilisation of SAIL, which includes the four Integrated Steel Plants (ISPs), and of IISCO, a subsidiary of SAIL, and also of Rashtriya Nigam Nigam Limited (RINL) during the last three years. However, the integrated steel plant-wise saleable steel capacity utilisation at SAIL, IISCO and RINL is as follows:—

(Unit: %)

	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96
DSP	68	85	76
RSP	97	103	95
BSP	106	108	111
BSL	102	100	106
SAIL (4ISPs)	99	102	102
IISCO	82	82	75
RINL	45	59	80

IISCO is operating with a derated capacity. The Annual" Plan has, therefore, been treated as the capacity.

Major reasons for not achieving 100% capacity utilisation at Rourkela Steel Plant during 1995-96 include operational problems at Blast Furnaces which are not fully modernised as yet, facilities set-up under modernisation are under stabilisation, etc. Similarly, the main reason for lower capacity utilisation in Durgapur Steel Plant has been the progressive stabilisation of modernisation facilities, etc.

(c) and (d) Profit & Loss for SAIL are declared for SAIL as a Company consisting of its various plants and central units. Plantwise details of Profit & Loss in ISPs of SAIL, IISCO and RINL for the last three years is as follows:—

(Rs. in Crores)

Years	BSP	DSP	RSP	BSL	SAIL as a Company (Before Tax)	IISCO	RINL
1993-94	368	-213	3	468	545	-76	-573
1994-95	639	-94	19	662	1163	-6	-364
1995-96	819	-174	-57	806	1319	-49	-204

(*) Indicates Loss.

(e) In addition to modernisation, undertaken in Rourkela, Bokaro and Durgapur Steel Plants, SAIL is also taking steps on continuous basis to improve the profits and reduce losses which include increase in capacity utilisation, •improving productivity, introducing energy conservation measures etc.

Improvement in capacity utilisation and removal of causes that are responsible for losses in IISCO and contingent upon modernisation/revival of IISCO. As IISCO has been referred to the BIFR since 1994, any scheme to be taken up for modernisation will have to-be in accordance with the orders of the BIFR in this regard. Similarly, RINL has taken measures including setting up of balancing facilities between the converter shop and CCD, imparting Training and skill development to the employees by both deputing them to the operating plants abroad as well as by arranging training at site through foreign specialists, taking up modifications of the plant and equipment to improve the production pick-up and pr6ductivity, capital restructuring, and cost reduction initiative to contain the cost of production and increase realisations.

Loss of Customs duty due to unlateral duty free access to Imports from SAPTA Countries

933. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India will lose a maximum amount of Rs. 1ll crores on customs duty if it gives unilateral duty free access to imports from SAPTA countries;

(b) if so, whether the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade has conducted a survey on measures to liberalise trade in SAARC;

(c) if so, the main points of the study; and

(d) the extent to which Government have examined the study report?

THE MINISTER OF.STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) to (d) The Indian Institute of Foreign Trade has conducted a study and prepared"* paper entitled "Measures to liberalise trade in SAARC: Revenue loss, trade diversion and competitivensess". In this paper revenue implications have been discussed for various duty concession options taking also into account the trade diversion that may take place as a result of granting duty free access to SAARC region. This study has estimated that unilateral duty free access to the Indian market for SAARC goods and diversion of trade would result in a customs duty loss of about Rs. 13S crores.

Steps to boost production of coal in Singareni Collieries

934. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY:
DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD:

Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether thermal power production in NTPC and urea production in Fertilizer Corporation of India are hit by acute coal shortages; and

(b) if so, the steps taken to boost production of coal in Singareni Collieries affected due to main in open cast mine arise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH): (a) Singareni Collieries Company Ltd. has been able to maintain the required level of coal supplies to the NTPC's unit at Ramagundem during the current year inspite of production constraints arising out of heavy rains and problems related with industrial relations in the company. The coal supplies vis-a-vis linkages during the period from April, 96 to October, 96 to this power station was as follows:—

(Fig. in lakh tonnes)
(Date provisional)

Linkage	Supply	% materialisation
50.75	52.33	103%

In addition to the above. the power station was offered additional quantity by road from a nearby colliery. The power house, however, did not avail of this offer.

The Ramagundem unit of Fertilizer Corporation of India Ltd. (FC1) did not lift coal regularly during the period April-July, 96 due to their internal problems.